

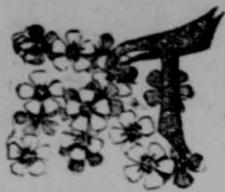
I little know or care  
If the blackbird on the bough  
Is filling all the air  
With his soft crescendo now;  
For she is gone away,  
And when she went she took  
The springtime in her lock,  
The peachblow on her cheek,  
The laughter from the brook,  
The blue from out the May—  
And what she calls a week  
Is forever and a day!

—Thomas Bailey Aldrich, in Atlantic Monthly.

It's little that I mind  
How the blossoms, pink or white,  
At every touch of wind  
Fall a-trampling with delight;  
For in the leafy lane,  
Beneath the garden boughs,  
And through the silent house  
One thing alone I seek.  
Until she comes again  
The May is not the May,  
And what she calls a week  
Is forever and a day!

## THE GHOSTLY SINGER.

By ALICE E. IVES.



HE Rev. Bronson Masters objected to Mr. Shelby. The first and foremost reason for this aversion was that Mr.

Shelby had presumed to pay marked attentions to his daughter Eleanor. The second was that Mr. Shelby was simply a bank clerk on a small salary.

Prejudiced people might have been ungenerous enough to observe that the second objection bore the most weight with the Reverend Masters; but such persons have never known the anxiety of a parent with a marriageable daughter. How then can they be expected to judge intelligently on such an important question?

"You are quite right, Bronson," said his sister-in-law. "What do you know about Mr. Shelby? You remember the acquaintance was begun in an irregular way—a very irregular way."

There was no denying it did begin in an irregular way. The Merchants and Traders Bank was next door to the residence of the Reverend Bronson Masters; and Mr. Jack Shelby, an industrious, energetic young clerk, with his ledger quite near the front window, had allowed his eyes to feast frequently on the graceful figure and pretty face of Miss Eleanor Masters as she fitted in and out of her father's house.

Strange to say, Miss Masters had also occasionally allowed her glance to stray toward the front window of the bank. Not that any one could positively state under oath that she had seen the rather high-bred face of a brown-eyed bank clerk in that same window; certainly not. But one day she slipped and fell on the icy pavement in front of the bank just as Shelby was coming out; and he helped her into the house, and was asked to call, and did call.

Another strange thing was that neither of them seemed to regret the accident, as it would seem natural they should.

Shelby, the third time he called, rather damaged his prospects by getting into a discussion with the Reverend Bronson Masters in which he manifested a tendency to spiritualism, theosophy and other occult and unorthodox beliefs. This bad impression was otherwise augmented by the discovery that he had no fortune, not even expectations, and was dependent on his salary for a living.

The growing affection of the young people for each other was noticed by Mr. Masters, and he immediately consulted with his sister-in-law, having no one else with whom to consult, and as has been seen, she quite agreed with him that such affection should be immediately nipped in the bud.

Accordingly Mr. Shelby was given to understand that Miss Masters was no longer at home to him. But Shelby's ledger was still near the front window, and Miss Masters had no mode of egress or ingress except by the front door of her residence, so Love still preserved his old reputation in regard to locksmiths, and laughed after the good old fashion.

About this time the Reverend Bronson Masters met a fascinating widow, Mrs. Horton Verlane, who had lately become a member of his congregation. Mr. Masters intimated to Eleanor that he would like her to ask Mrs. Verlane to call. Like a dutiful daughter she obeyed, and Mrs. Verlane promptly accepted the invitation.

She came often, and dined and lunched with them, much to the pleasure of the host, but secretly to the annoyance of his daughter.

"Mrs. Verlane never seems to me genuine," she ventured to say one day to her father.

"Eleanor, I am surprised at such an uncharitable, unchristianlike remark from you," was the stern reply.

She saw that her father was deeply annoyed, and dared not say more; but when he closed the door after him, her feelings found audible vent.

"Oh, it's all right for you to send away poor Jack because I like him," she cried, "and here you are falling in love with a mysterious woman whom nobody knows, and who I'm sure is a schemer. Oh, I wish I were your father, for just one hour! Wouldn't I turn her out flying! Wouldn't I?"

And she walked the floor in her helpless rage.

Shortly after this Mr. Masters announced to his daughter that he would spend his vacation in Europe. "I have decided to take you with me," he added.

Eleanor was delighted with the prospect, and gave her parent an ecstatic hug.

"Shall you close the house, papa?" she asked.

"No, Mrs. Verlane will rent it furnished. I consider myself particularly fortunate to have her here to look after things," he said.

Eleanor didn't agree with him, but concluded that silence in this case was wisdom.

"Mr. Burrows will take a room, too, so there will be the added protection of a man in the house," added Mr. Masters.

Mr. Berkeley Burrows was a nephew of Mrs. Verlane; he had been introduced to the Masters family by his aunt. Eleanor felt something of the same aversion for him that she did for Mrs. Verlane; but the Reverend Masters considered him a young gentleman of great promise. Besides, he had large expectations, as that gentleman phrased it, and such things are not to be looked upon as drawbacks in a son-in-law.

No communication being allowed between the young man in the front window of the bank and the young woman next door, Mr. Jack Shelby went off on his vacation without having had an opportunity to inform Miss Masters of the fact.

Shortly after he left she sailed for Europe, having cast a longing glance into the front window as she entered the carriage which was to convey her to the pier. The glance met no response, and she was both piqued and grieved, but gave no sign.

Mrs. Verlane came into possession; and the bank clerk returned from his vacation. His weary eyes watching for Eleanor's flitting to and fro were greeted only with the apparition of a rather stout blonde woman handsomely arrayed, and not disposed to look his way.

He concluded she was a visitor of the Masters; and that perhaps Eleanor was away for a week or two. He knew nothing of the departure of the family for Europe.

One evening about half-past six, as he was going to dinner, he discovered that he had left in the bank two theatre tickets, which he wished to use that night. He turned back, wondering if he would be able to get in to find them.

The deaf old janitor was just finishing up his work; but he had some trouble in attracting his attention, the night watchman not having yet come on duty. He finally succeeded, and the old fellow sat down in a corner to wait for him, and dozed off.

How quiet it was! The street traffic and roll of teams had ceased, and for the first time Shelby heard the tick of the clock on the wall. He had never been in the bank before so late. This strange silence made him feel as though he sat with the ghost of the bustling, noisy business place whose features he knew so well. It was something dreamlike and unreal.

The strangeness of it all seemed to produce a peculiar impression upon him. He felt that could he sufficiently master the occult forces of nature, that in this great, quiet place, and so near her home, he might make the girl he loved feel his presence.

The silence became more profound. Suddenly he heard a low, musical sound. He could not tell from whence it came. It seemed almost under his feet. As he listened it became more distinct. There was a strain very like a well-known air from "Trovatore."

Next he heard a name which made his heart beat fast.

"O Eleanor," sounded the soft, mysterious voice, instead of the familiar words "O Leonora" in the opera.

Then it died out, and he heard no more.

The young man seemed under a spell. For a moment or two he could not move. When he had sufficiently recovered himself, he started up and opened all the doors into the various apartments and corridors, trying to account for the mystic voice.

The more he searched the more he became assured that the sound had some occult significance, and came either from the woman he loved, or

from some spirit who wished to warn him of peril to her.

As he closed the door leading from the president's room the sleepy janitor awakened with a start. He eyed Shelby suspiciously.

"Was ye wantin' anything in there, sir?" he asked gruffly.

"No; I simply opened the door because I heard a strange sound. Do you ever hear strange sounds about here?" he asked.

"Don't hear nothin'," answered the deaf servitor, crustily, and Shelby took himself off.

The next day he thought of nothing but the strange happening at the bank. He burned with curiosity to again investigate. After hours he went again a little later and found Flynn, the watchman, there. Flynn didn't seem disposed to give him much time alone for occult demonstrations.

He invented a pretext for getting Flynn away. It was quiet, and he listened intently. Again he heard the low, musical sound. Then came the wailing words, low but distinct: "O Eleanor." The voice, which seemed half reproach, half entreaty, was heart-rending in its appeal.

The cold drops gathered on his forehead. What did it mean?

The next moment the watchman came in and put an end to further investigations. He could invent no further pretext for remaining, and went away.

The morning after this the president gave him an odd look as he passed through. Shelby went and stared into the mirror to see if he had omitted his necktie, or if there was anything peculiar in his personal appearance. He saw nothing but his rather haggard features.

There was a new clerk installed near him, and this man he also caught looking at him in a scrutinizing way. He wondered why he had suddenly become so suspicious of every one. Was this mystery, together with his suspense about Eleanor, driving him insane? Was she menaced by some terrible peril?

If he could only spend a night alone in the bank, what might he not discover?

He determined to go boldly to the president, Mr. Bortree, and ask his permission to do so.

"What is your reason for such a strange request?" asked the official, looking suspiciously at him.

Shelby hesitated. Could he tell this hard, cold man of facts?

"You are aware, of course, that should anything happen here it would immediately be traced to you," added Mr. Bortree.

Then it flashed upon Shelby that it was suspicion he saw in this man's face.

"My intentions are the most innocent," he said, straightening up. "I think the bank is haunted, that's all. I am fond of investigating such things."

"Why, so am I," said Mr. Bortree. "I'm a member of the Society for Psychological Research. Spend the night in the bank if you like; only I'm afraid you won't feel much like work the next day."

That night Shelby went to the bank about ten, settled himself in two leather covered chairs, and prepared to await developments.

An hour wore on during which he heard nothing.

Then he was startled by a sound. It was a soft, clicking noise. It was in front. The door was opened. There were the footfalls of two men. He got up, and peered out cautiously over the high counter.

The watchman and Mr. Bortree were coming toward him.

"I told you I was interested in the occult," said the President, cheerfully. "I've come to help you watch."

A shade of annoyance passed over Shelby's face. How could he expect any developments with this man there?

Two hours passed by in silence, during which the President read and smoked.

There were no ghostly manifestations.

Shelby was getting very sleepy, and wishing he hadn't come, when suddenly he heard the familiar "O Eleanor."

Mr. Bortree heard it at the same time and looked at Shelby.

Then there came a faint echo of the words, and in a minute or two a soft tapping.

"Strange!" muttered Mr. Bortree. "What direction did that come from?"

"Under there," said Shelby, pointing to the vault.

"Let us go in and see if we can still hear it."

They called the watchman, and went into the vault. It was as quiet as the grave. Shelby lay down and put his ear to the floor. Suddenly he started up.

"My God!" he cried, "it is hollow under there! Some one is undermining the vault! I can hear them at work."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Mr. Bortree. "On that side is the Knickerbocker Insurance Company. Who could bore from there?"

"It doesn't come from that side. It comes—"

Suddenly Shelby stopped, as pale as death.

"What? From Mr. Masters' house?"

"Yes," he stammered, feeling choked with the horror of it.

"I must give the alarm at once."

"Wait!" cried Shelby, clinging to his arm. "They are ready to come up, and they are ready for murder. They are watching on the outside, doubtless. Don't think of going out alone."

The president gave him a strange look.

"I am ready to risk anything. For myself I am not afraid," said the young man looking the other full in the face.

"Then take this lantern and hold it in the window."

It was an ordinary bull's eye lantern which Mr. Bortree took from under a chair, and which he had evidently hidden there.

In that moment Shelby knew that he had been the subject of a horrible suspicion. But he quietly took the light and obeyed.

After about three minutes, someone tapped on the door. The President opened it, and admitted two policemen.

Shelby spoke first.

"Put a guard on that house instantly," he said, pointing to the Masters' residence. "Don't let any one leave it. There is a tunnel from there under the vault."

"Why, a woman and two men went away from there just as we came in," said the policeman. "I thought the minister was having some company."

"Quick!" cried Shelby. "It may be too late now."

His brain was in a whirl. It seemed so horrible to put a guard of police about her house.

Investigations revealed an empty house with the basement dug up, and forming the entrance to a tunnel under the bank.

An extract from the morning paper read:

"Mrs. Horton Verlane, alias Arlington, alias Baker, is at her old tricks again. This time she nearly succeeded in carrying out one of the boldest bank robberies on record. Jake Perley, whom she had been passing off as her nephew, was her accomplice."

Mr. Jack Shelby is now assistant cashier, and the wedding with Miss Eleanor Masters is to take place just after Easter.

"Shelby," said the President, as he congratulated him the other day, "I won't deny that I had you shadowed. That new clerk was a special detective placed on you. To think you should only have been a crank after all! But did you ever account for that strange singing of the 'O Eleanor'?"

"Oh, yes," said Shelby. "That was evidently a signal. It wouldn't excite suspicion like a whistle, you know."

### A Predatory Crow.

For several weeks the residents of a neighboring town have been puzzled to account for the disappearance of small articles, consisting of jewelry, penholders, napkin rings and other trinkets, and the failure to apprehend the thief. On Friday, however, the offender was accidentally caught in the act. A gentleman who had been acquainted with the fact that the things had been stolen was talking to a friend, when his attention was attracted to a noise in his office, and on going to ascertain the cause was surprised to see a pet crow, belonging to Mr. Blank, pick up a gold pen and fly from the window to the ground, with the pen in his month.

The gentleman followed the crow, which went to a shed back of a bakery, and saw the bird deposit the pen under an old box. He drove the crow away, and turning up the box, found all the articles that had been stolen from the different houses. The owner of the crow was called, and he identified several trinkets that had been taken from his room. The articles were returned to their respective owners.—Kalamazoo (Mich.) Telegraph.

### Sewing on Board Ship.

Any sailor or marine on a man-of-war may "tailorize" for his shipmates' money if he has the skill, and on every ship there are always a dozen or so of men, usually bluejackets, making extra money in the devising of uniforms and caps. The bluejacket clothes served out to new sailors are quite as atrocious in the matter of fit as the Government straight uniforms of the army, and all the unofficial tailors have generally all the work they can attend to in the manufacturing of mustering shirts and trousers. These men do their work on small, unmounted sewing machines—which suggests the recollection, by the way, that when the great disaster occurred at Samoa, about ten years ago, about three-quarters of the ships' companies of the *Vandalia* and *Nipsic*, the men-of-war wrecked at Apia, put in claims for sewing machines as among the articles lost with their other personal effects! As to whether all the claims were allowed or not is another story.—Washington Star.

### A Bee in His Stomach.

While Peter Carson, of Kalama, Wash., was eating his dinner a yellow jacket got into his mouth and was swallowed, or at any rate went down his esophagus, and, according to the Western chronicler, stung him in the stomach. It took a physician's services to give the bee its quietus. Carson described his sensations as those a man might feel who was blown up by dynamite just as a house fell upon him.—New York Sun.

### LIFE IN SKAGWAY.

Elvly Scenes in the Town Nearest the Klondike Gold Fields.

There is no shady side to life at Skagway; everything goes on in broad daylight or candle light. After supper every tent is lighted up, and the streets are crowded with muddied men in from the trail. The "Pack Train" is filled with people, among whom I recognize several of my friends, who are drawn hither, like myself, by the spectacle. The tent of this, the biggest saloon in town, is thirty by fifty feet. Entering through a single door in front, on the right hand is a rough board bar some ten or twelve feet long, with some shelves against the rear wall, on which are a few glasses and bottles. The bartender, who is evidently new to his business, apologizes for the whisky, which is very poor and two-thirds water, and sells for twenty-five cents. Cigars of a two-for-five or five-cent sort that strain one's suction powers to the limit are sold for fifteen to twenty-five cents each. They keep beer also, on tap. After the lecture we received on the steamer from the United States customs officer, we are at a loss to understand how whisky can be sold openly under the very eyes of the officers. But that is a story by itself. Along each side of the tent are three-card monte, rouge et noir, and other layouts, but not a faro layout in the place, nor in the town. The gamblers are doing big business.

A big strapping fellow in a yellow Mackinaw jacket trying his luck at craps is pointed out as having just come in over the trail from Klondike. Whether he had any dust with him I cannot learn, but he was in fine health and spirits. Every man whom I have yet seen from Klondike has had a splendid complexion, and seems strong and robust. This fellow has a voice like a lion's, deep and resonant. Surely the Yukon cannot be so terrible if it does this to men, or else its tale of death is that of the weak and sickly. As they used to say of the Kanakas, they were all strong and healthy because they were thrown into the water by their mothers almost the day they were born—consequently none but the strong survived.

Across the street the sound of a piano and the moving figures of men and women through the windows remind one that there is a dance to-night, as on every night. This piano is the only one in town, and its arrival is said to have been an event. The four women in the place are not even of the painted set; even paint might have covered up some of the marks of dissipation. Clumsy boots beat time on a dirty floor, but not with much enthusiasm.—Harper's Weekly.

### New York's Great Public Library.

The space now occupied by the reservoir, which makes such a picturesque feature of the Fifth avenue vista, is 482 by 455 feet, so that there will be room for an edifice of really magnificent dimensions with sufficient space about it to insure a plentiful supply of light and air. The structure will cost \$1,700,000, exclusive of heating, lighting and all interior equipment. It will measure about 230 by 340 feet, which would allow about seventy-five feet of ground on the Fifth avenue front, and about fifty-eight on Fortieth and Forty-second streets. On the west side there is, happily, Bryant Park, with its pleasant relief of green foliage. The stone building will probably be faced with Indiana limestone. The book-stacks will be in the first and second stories and the basement, leaving the third story for the reading room and other purposes. This arrangement seems best not only because of the light and airy position given to the reading room, but also because it would allow an easy and symmetrical extension of the building to the west, if that should be desired. The spacious main reading room, lighted from above, and free from dust and noise, will be supplemented by special reading rooms for students, on the second and third floors.—Scribner's.

### When One Can Work Best.

At what hour of the day is a man at his strongest, and so fitted to do hard work with the least weariness? Probably the answer occurring at once to most persons would be, "When he gets up in the morning." This is by no means the case; on the contrary, according to experiments of Dr. Buch with the dynamometer, a man is precisely at his weakest when he turns out of bed. Our muscular force is greatly increased by breakfast, but it attains to its highest point after the midday meal. It then sinks for a few hours, rises again towards evening, but steadily declines from night till morning. The two chief foes of muscular force, according to Dr. Buch, are overwork and idleness. Sweating at work deteriorates the muscles. Many of the great workers of the world have been early risers. But early rising, according to Buch's doctrine, ought always to be supplemented by early breakfasting.—London Star.

### Ben Franklin as a Boy.

Dr. Franklin was irreverent when a boy. One day after the winter provisions had been salted he said, "I think, father, that if you would say grace over the whole cask it would be a great saving at meal time."